

June 2008

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Lavender Seniors of the East Bay Official Newsletter

Lavender Notes

A Project of the Tides Center

1395 Bancroft Avenue

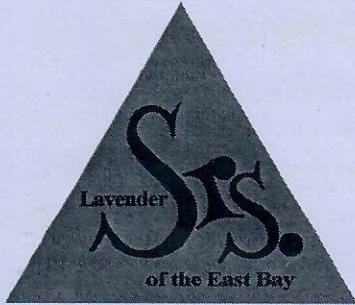
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Gay Marriage Legal!

Gay marriage legal in California, court declares

By Crystal Carreon and Bill Lindelof - ccarreon@sacbee.com

Published 10:06 am PDT Thursday, May 15, 2008

SAN FRANCISCO - A deeply divided California Supreme Court legalized gay marriage in an opinion issued Thursday morning.

Wild cheers echoed throughout City Hall and other spots where proponents had gathered Thursday morning awaiting the opinion, which came on a 4-3 vote.

The case stems from challenges to state law by gay couples who were married in ceremonies at San Francisco City Hall in 2004, when Mayor Gavin Newsom began issuing marriage licenses to same-sex couples.

Legal challenges to those marriages eventually led to the high court invalidating them six months later. California voters had approved, by a wide margin, a measure in 2000 that declared marriage to be only between a man and a

woman, but San Francisco officials and about 20 of the couples granted licenses four years ago challenged the courts decision that invalidated their marriages, and in March the seven justices heard three hours of arguments over whether the state's ban on gay marriage denies gays and lesbians their constitutional rights.

Thursday's opinion has been eagerly anticipated by both sides in the argument, with many saying a decision in California would be felt nationwide. Only Massachusetts allows gay marriage.

Opponents of same-sex marriage already have readied a new ballot measure that would amend the state constitution to ban such unions.

By midmorning Thursday, same-sex couples hoping for a favorable ruling began to line up outside the San Francisco city clerk's office.

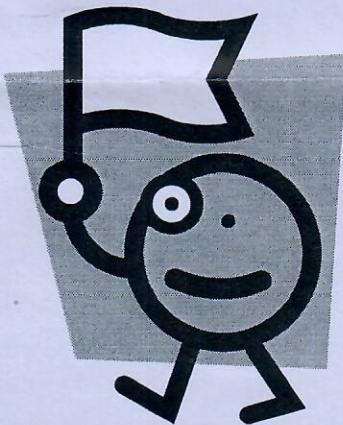
Standing at the head of the line, San Francisco couple Bruce Ivie and David Bowers said they were waiting for history.

"I just feel it," said Ivie, 51 wearing a T-shirt emblazoned with a pink triangle and "Proud Forever" on it. "California has always been a trendsetter. It's now about time."

Ivie and Bowers, together for 28 years, were among the thousands of gay couples who rushed to City Hall to be married in 2004.

They said they were horrified and heartbroken when their marriage was later voided, and spent the next four years following the gay marriage case as it made its way through the courts.

(Continued on page 4)



Lavender Seniors of the East Bay is funded by individuals as well as Alameda County Area Agency on Aging, Alameda County Leather Corps, California Council for the Humanities, The California Endowment, City of Oakland Aging & Adult Services, City of Fremont, Contra Costa County Area Agency on Aging, East Bay Community Foundation, Gay Chemists Support Fund, Horizons Foundation, Royal Grand Ducal Council/Alameda County, San Francisco Foundation, Bay Area Physicians/ Human Rights, Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence and Van Loben Sels/RembeRock Foundation We gratefully acknowledge the support of all Friends of Lavender Seniors.

LavenderNotes

is the official newsletter of
Lavender Seniors of the East Bay.

Mission Statement

The mission of Lavender Seniors of the East Bay is to improve the quality of life of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender seniors through direct service, community outreach, advocacy, and education.

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Next Advisory Board Meeting

Jun.11th - 7PM. Call 510-667-9655 for more information.
All are welcome; public comments take place at 7PM.

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Lavender Seniors welcomes all persons age 55 and older, their partners, allies, and guests. Cost of production and mail makes necessary a request of \$20 minimum annual donation to receive the newsletter. Visitors & others may receive the newsletter for three months without charge. No one is turned away for lack of funds. For gifts, make checks payable to Tides Center / Lavender Seniors.

Signed articles represent the opinion of the authors and not necessarily those of Lavender Seniors. Inclusion of a name in this newsletter does not necessarily indicate a person's sexual orientation or gender identity.

ARE YOU CONFINED TO YOUR HOME OR YOUR ROOM?

If you are or you know someone who is, let us know. We have Friendly Visitor volunteers who want to meet you!! Call Pat, 510-667-9655

What We Do...

Founded in 1994, Lavender Seniors of the East Bay provides the following:

LGBT Seniors of Color: Improves access to health and human services to LGBT seniors in the African-American, Latino, Native American, Asian, and Pacific Islander communities.

Friendly Visitors Program: Matches volunteers with isolated and /or frail LGBT seniors for social support, light household and shopping assistance, and telephone assurance.

Cultural Competency Training: Through LGBT Senior panelists, educates service providers to comply with state laws to change policies and practices to make service more accessible to LGBT seniors.

Monthly Informative Social Gatherings: Help build informal social networks and individual's knowledge of issues affecting seniors at the Monthly Potluck in San Leandro, Lavender Lunch Bunch in Oakland, and South County Lunch and TalkAbout at the Fremont Senior Center.

Community Involvement: Engages in community building and partnering processes with local governments in order to insert LGBT elders' needs into their planning efforts.

Monthly Discussion Groups: Coming Out Again, Fellows of East Bay and Seniors Men's Afternoon co-sponsored and co-hosted by the North Berkeley Senior Center and Pacific Center (see back page for schedules) provide LGBT support group settings to elders in the North County.

Monthly newsletter: *Lavender Notes.*

Website: <http://www.lavenderseniors.org>

To get involved as a participant or volunteer, contact us at 510-667-9655, press 1, or go to: <http://www.lavenderseniors.org>

June Birthdays

June 2 Ginger Collins	June 15 Babs Smith Bayla Bower
June 3 Kathy McCarter	June 16 Teresa Head James Eilers
June 7 Marianne Camp D'Anne Bruetsch Nona Hungate Kresse Heinz	June 18 William Heck
June 9 Bill Austin	June 20 Donna Leonard Mike Webster
June 11 Shoshana Dembitz	June 23 Morris Simpson
June 12 Jeff Vessels Jim Carey	June 24 M. Apolorio
June 13 James Silva	June 28 Jeanne Squires Stephanie Ann Blythe Cotys Winston

MONTHLY POTLUCK

Saturday, Jun 14th 12 noon to 2pm

Program: Pride story telling and celebration

- | | |
|----------|-----------------------|
| A thru K | bring a Salad |
| L thru R | bring a Dessert/Fruit |
| S thru Z | bring a Main Dish |



Become a "Friend of Lavender Seniors" Today!

Your support is crucial to Lavender Seniors' continuing role as a vital resource to our community.

Become a "Friend of Lavender Seniors." Please take a moment and send your gift today. Your annual giving entitles you to a subscription to our monthly newsletter, *Lavender Notes*.

Here's my gift of: \$20 \$35* \$50 \$100 \$250 \$1000 Other \$ _____

(* Please give this amount or more if possible.)

Enclosed is a check made payable to **Tides Center / Lavender Seniors**

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Card #: _____ Expires: ____/____ Signature: _____

Name: _____ Home Telephone: _____

Address: _____ E-mail Address: _____

City/State/ZIP: _____ @ _____

Referred by: _____

- Please contact me about including Lavender Seniors in my will.
- Please contact me about participating in Lavender Seniors' programs and or volunteering.
- Please do NOT list me in Lavender Seniors publications as a "Friend of Lavender Seniors."

Please mail to: Lavender Seniors of the East Bay, 1395 Bancroft Avenue, San Leandro, CA 94577
REMEMBER THAT YOUR DONATIONS TO LAVENDER SENIORS ARE TAX-DEDUCTIBLE

(Continued from page 1)

"We'll have each other forever, but we deserve the same rights as everybody else," Bowers said. "How can it hurt anyone else?"

A line slowly began to snake around the vinyl ropes outside the clerk's office.

Outside the court building Thursday, gay and lesbian proponents gathered, with many saying they were extremely anxious as they awaited the opinion.

Among the group were two Davis women, Shelly Bailes and Ellen Pontac, who said they have been together for 34 years and were the 45th couple married at City Hall in 2004.

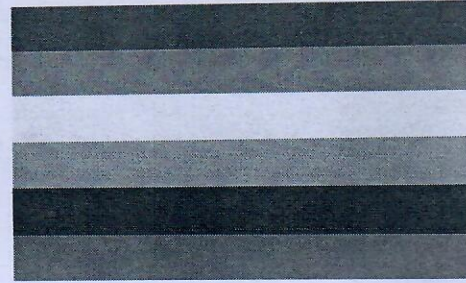
Pontac carried a sign that said "Life feels different when you are married."

"We are full of hope," Bailes said. "This is extremely important. We have been fighting this fight for a really long time."

The women, who will speak tonight at a Sacramento gathering in midtown, drove to San Francisco to be at the courthouse for the decision.

"Shelly said this morning that she wouldn't be this nervous when we get married," Pontac said. "We've been together for 34 years. It has been a long-enough engagement."

"The future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams." - Eleanor Roosevelt



Gay Pride Flag

The gay pride flag, which was debuted at the 1978 San Francisco Gay and Lesbian Freedom Day Parade, was designed by Gilbert Baker. Its inspiration came from the black civil rights and hippie movements.

Each color on the gay pride flag (also known as the rainbow flag) has a different meaning.

Red	Life
Orange	Healing
Yellow	Sun
Green	Nature
Royal Blue	Harmony
Violet	Spirit

Adding a black stripe to the bottom of the flag represents victory over Aids. It can also signify leather daddy pride.

Gay Pride History

The first gay pride parade in 1969, known as the March on Stonewall, started as a protest against discrimination and violence against gays in New York City. Today, pride events have become an annual ritual and have grown to include thousands of gay and gay-friendly participants, not to mention hundreds of spectators. Many gays and lesbians dress in bright colors, head-to-toe leather or sometimes next to nothing. But regardless of the attire, all of the participants join the festivities to remind the world that gays deserve the same rights as others and people should be free to live their own lifestyle, void of judgments or hate. Gay pride is also a symbol of solidarity and an opportunity to express the vivid personalities which reflect the diverse gay communities throughout the world. During this time (and in many places year round), the skies are covered with the gay pride flags and banners, the symbol of gay solidarity and freedom

Reflections

Dear Lord,

So far today, am I doing all right?

I have not gossiped, lost my temper, been greedy, grumpy, nasty, selfish, or self-indulgent. I have not whined, complained, cursed, or eaten any chocolate. I have charged nothing on my credit card.

But I will be getting out of bed in a minute, and I think that I will really need your help then.

....

Do what you can, for who you can with what you have, and where you are.

....

A hug is a great gift...one size fits all. It can be given for any occasion and it's easy to exchange.

Bill to Protect LGBT Seniors Passes Senate Health Committee with Testimony from Lavender Seniors!

Migden Measure, Sponsored by EQCA, Would Train Healthcare Professionals About the Needs of LGBT Seniors to Prevent Isolation, Discrimination

On April 16, The Senate Health Committee passed legislation that would help create an environment that is free from discrimination for LGBT seniors in nursing homes and senior care facilities.

Senate Bill 1729, authored by Sen. Carole Migden, D-San Francisco, and sponsored by Equality California, would train licensed health professionals who care for seniors about the unique needs of the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) community. Committee members passed the bill with an initial 6-1 vote.

"Seniors in our community are more likely to live in 24-hour care facilities in their later years due to lifelong experiences of discrimination and the lack of legal safety nets, such as Social Security survivor benefits, that help keep people in their homes after retirement," said EQCA Executive Director Geoff Kors. "Once they do receive professional care in a nursing home or senior facility, LGBT seniors should not have to face further isolation, discrimination, or a lack of acceptance based on their sexual orientation or gender identity."

SB 1729 would require licensed healthcare professionals who have constant interaction with seniors to participate in a training program that focuses on preventing discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity. Many health professionals already receive cultural diversity training, but it does not include information and education about LGBT issues.

"We want to make sure all seniors receive the essential services, programs and activities they need and deserve," said Sen. Migden. "SB 1729 will help foster a culture of respect within senior care facilities so every person who needs support feels welcome in that environment."

Testifying before the committee, Frank Howell, a senior from Hayward and Advisory Board Member for Lavender Seniors of the East Bay, said he was not allowed to make medical decisions for his now deceased partner, John, even though Howell was listed as his caregiver.

"In some cases when gays or lesbians are admitted to nursing care facilities they are not even allowed to visit their partners – or even hold hands," Howell said. "A large number of retirement homes have no official written policy regarding gay and lesbian residents and are totally ignorant of any of the issues involved."

Basic rights, such as the choice to live in the same nursing home with a partner and the right to hospital visitation, are routinely denied to same-gender couples in older age, according to a 2000 study from the Policy Institute of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force. The study also shows

that same-gender partners lack essential protections, including Medicaid benefits and access to pensions, which would typically protect the assets, homes and retirement funds of surviving spouses.

"I personally witness the effects of this isolation among LGBT seniors regularly as a caregiver to an 86-year-old gay man with Alzheimer's," said Dan Ashbrook, Director of the Lavender Seniors of the East Bay. "He was institutionalized at age 17 when his parents found out he was gay. Now he lives a life of poor health and isolation because of his mistrust of the health care system."

"You are never too old to set another goal or to dream a new dream." -C.S. Lewis

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Gay Pride Celebration at the North Berkeley Senior Center

When: Tuesday June 17th at 1:30 PM.

Where: 1901 Hearst Avenue

Berkeley, CA 94709 – (510) 981-5190

United Seniors of Oakland Healthy Living Festival

When: Friday, June 27th from 9:00 to 2:00

Where: Lake Merritt Garden Center and Bandstand

666 Bellevue Ave., Oakland.

Lavender Seniors will have a table there.

LGBT Elders Dialogue with Teens

When: Saturday, June 14, from 12 to 2

Where: West Auditorium, Main Library

125 14th Street, Oakland. CA.

The Lavender Scrolls Project portrays the lives of eight lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender elders. It features photographs, life-story excerpts and quotations that defy stereotypes about being old and gay, while also demonstrating the realities common to all elders. The project is presented by Oakland's personal historian Cathy Cade.

Come meet with the subjects of The Lavender Scrolls. This is your chance to ask LGBT seniors those questions you've always wanted to ask. Refreshments will be served. See www.lavenderseniors.org and click on "scrolls". Call 238-4974 for more information.

"You need only claim the events of your life to make yourself yours."

- Florida Scott-Maxwell

**Beyond (Straight and Gay) Marriage:
Valuing All Families under the Law**

By Nancy D. Polikoff

Beacon Press-\$24.95

2008 is going to be a crucial year for the rights of sexual minorities in California. The California Supreme Court will soon render a decision on gay marriage and the whole issue may boil down to a decision by voters in November if voters decide on a constitutional amendment.

At this point readers may exclaim, "Not another book on gays and lesbians and transgender in the marriageable marketplace!" But this one offers an entirely new slant on the legal details that the devil has offered us.

Nancy Polikoff is professor of law at the American University Washington College of Law. She has a partner and a daughter and has labored in the vineyard of lavender issues for over 30 years.

Polikoff has managed to turn this provocative issue on its exhausted head. Her vision soars beyond gay marriage and asks, why not civil rights for **all couples** and not just those who are hetero, homo, or transgender. She is thinking of couples who do not seek marriage at all. All sorts of families are entitled to respect. Do they really need to marry? This new perspective should send legal scholars screaming in all directions. Polikoff simply recognizes that new kinship forms continue to emerge. Conservatives will no doubt argue that such an approach will make the framework to elastic to survive.

At this point we are shown the standard historical survey of marriage and how it has evolved through the centuries. There has been rapid progress and the expected backlash thanks to the likes of Phyllis Schafley and Anita Bryant.

In the 1980s the **Village Voice** offered its employees the first edition of domestic partnerships. Ben and Jerry's, the ice cream moguls, came forth with health insurance for gay couples.

In 1987 President Reagan's Interagency Task Force said no to gay adoptions. So, quick-thinking attorneys devised new concepts such as second parent adoptions to keep the judges on their legalistic toes. Ean Wolfson created the Family Bill of Rights.

Bush the Second fought to restrict martial bliss to traditional families. Social scientists offered new studies to demonstrate that a partner of either sex could do the job of raising kids in non-traditional families. Child poverty has proven to play a significant role in how our offspring turn out.

Fundamentalist Christians prayed that only heterosexual unions could tame the wild beast contained in the breast of promiscuous men.

Polikoff further refines her attack by arguing that DOMA must be repealed and gay lovers should be allowed to marry in **all** states.

Population figures give us pause. 40% of those people over the age of 40 are unmarried. Thanks to the noble institution of divorce, the true enemy of marriage, over 5 million couples are unmarried. Among female same sex couples 38% have children and among same sex male couples 27% have children.

Canada offers the best deal of all. Married and unmarried couples are equal before the law and the American Law Institute recommends the same protections for couples in this country.

As the controversy continues to heat up across the country politicians and citizens would do well to consider Nancy Polikoff and her closely reasoned logic.

-Frank J. Howell

"The only thing that will stop you from fulfilling your dreams is you." -Tom Bradley

S.F. Dyke March 2008

When: Saturday, June 28, 2008**Where:** Dolores Park – 19th & Dolores, S.F.**Stage begins at 3:00pm****March takes off at 7:00pm**

In The Park, there will be a senior disabled non-smoking area near 19th Street with accessible porta-potty and a few chairs. Please bring your own chair if you can.

Senior/Disabled Cable Car will board and leave from Dolores Street opposite 19th Street at 6:00pm. The cable car is only for lesbians who cannot walk the length of the March.

Senior/Disabled Viewing Stand will be in front of Sha'ar Zahar at 16th & Dolores; chairs, refreshments and porta-potties will be set up by 6:00pm,

Senior/Disabled Parking Garage and Shuttle: Free parking starting at 2pm and a shuttle with wheelchair lift will be available at the Hoff St. Garage (off 16th, ½ block from the 16th St. Bart).

Shuttle service from the Garage to Dolores park will run between 2 and 4pm. Shuttle service from the park to Sha'ar Zahav will run from 5:30-6:30pm. After the Mrch passes the viewing stand, there will be 3 or 4 shuttles, as needed, from Sha'ar Zahav to the Garage.

For more information, go to www.dykemarch.org or leave a message at 510-383-9858

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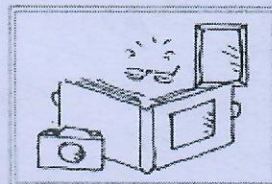
FREE consultation ~ Offices in Oakland and San Rafael
510.334.3550 / 415.453.4300

African American Lesbians 40+

Monthly meetings for social activities, potluck, card & board games, theatre outings and sports events.

For more Information
email tsmith3565@comcast.net

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& Photography



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LAVENDER SCROLLS ON THE NET

You can now see our lavender scrolls on the internet. Just click on the link Lavender Senior Links and see the wonderful stories of our members.

Susan Levinkind J.D.

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June 2008

Schedule of Events

Jun. 2 - 1:00 PM to 3:00PM- Coming Out Again Group – (1st Mon.) 1901 Hearst Ave. Berkeley, in the library. Co-sponsored by Lavender Seniors and North Berkeley Senior Center

Jun 8 – 5:30 to 6:30 PM – Fellows of the East Bay – (2nd Sun.) 1288 9th Street, Berkeley. Please bring \$4.00 (Donation) Door Charge, Plus Food, Dessert or Drink to Share. Social Hour 5:30 - Dinner 6:30.

Jun 11 - 7:00 PM – 8:30PM – Lavender Seniors Board Meeting –(Wed. before Potluck) 1395 Bancroft Ave., San Leandro.

Jun 12 and 26 - Seniors Men's Afternoon. (2nd & 4th Thurs) 2712 Telegraph Ave. Berkeley at the Pacific Center Co-Sponsor: Pacific Center 510-548-8283

Jun 14 – 12:00 PM to 2:00 PM –Lavender Potluck (2nd Sat.) 1395 Bancroft Ave, San Leandro- Program: Pride Celebration

Jun 20 - 12:30 to 2:30 PM - Lavender Lunch Bunch, (3rd Fri.) North Oakland Senior Center, 5714 MLK Jr. Way. (58th St.) Oakland. Sponsored by City of Oakland Aging and Adult Services. Program: Pride Celebration

Jun 27 – 12:00PM – 2:00PM – South County Lunch Bunch and Talk About, 40086 Paseo Padre Pkwy, Fremont. (4th Fri.) Program: Pride Stories. **FREE LUNCH** for LGBT Residents. Sponsor: City of Fremont, Human Services Dept. For more info. Contact Ina Mae Murri 510-490-5425.

Jun 29 – San Francisco Gay Pride Parade

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1	2 Coming Out	3	4	5	6	7
8 Fellows	9	10	11 Board Mtg	12 Senior Men	13	14 Potluck
15	16	17	18	19	20 Lunch Bunch	21
22	23	24	25	26 Senior Men	27 South County	28
29 Pride Parade	30					

ADVERTISING RATES* FOR LAVENDER NOTES

Ad Size	1 month	3 months	6 months	1 year
Classified Ad	\$2 per line (per month) on a 3-column page			
Business Card	\$30	\$75	\$140	\$250
Quarter Page	\$50	\$125	\$225	\$400
Half Page	\$90	\$220	\$400	\$750
Full Page	\$200	\$450	\$800	\$1400

* Individuals and non-profit organizations who have made an annual contribution of \$25 or more are entitled to discounts of 40% on classified ads and 20% on ads of other sizes. Lavender Seniors reserves the right to accept or reject any ad submitted.

* A one-page insert to Lavender Notes for one month may be purchased for the fee of: Non-Profits, \$250; For-Profits, \$500; ½ half page inserts are the same amount. Must be received by 10th of preceding month.